

AN
EPISTLE
To the AUTHOR of the
ESSAY
ON
REASON.

i.e. Walter Harte

Ne Sutor ultra Crepidam.



L O N D O N :

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ON

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LONG has the PoET's lawful Claim been known,
Time immemorial from PARNASSUS' *Crown*.
Let None dispute his old prescriptive Right,
Who fears his Satire, or who fears to *fight*.

Peaceful and prais'd, let him enjoy his Theme,

Love and a Bottle, or the purling Stream ;

A Patron tickled to his Heart's Content,

With Sense and Virtue, by the Poet lent ;

Sun, Moon, and Stars, Lakes, Statues, Groves and
Grotts, Nymphs and Swains, and Vales and lofty Moun-
[Fountains,
[tains ;

All

All these, & *cæt'ra*, with delicious Art,
High let him raise, to furnish a Desert.

BUT if the flatt'ring, rhiming, tuneful *Thing*
Pretends to *reason*, and forgets to sing ;
And, frantic with a wild, ungovern'd Flame,
Drops down quite giddy from his Seat of Fame :
(Like Lords of petty Provinces and Towns,
Who lose their Heads, by coveting of Crowns ;)
If, zealous for the *Druids* antient Cause,
He gives the World *Divinity* and *Laws* ;
Who but must laugh the Trifler and his Joke,
To see his Words break out in Fire and Smoke !
So Children gazing at the Clouds and Skies,
See Gods and Monsters, — (with poetic Eyes.)

HOWE'ER we quibble about *Sounds* and *Words*,
REASON's the grand Resource, which Light affords.
If dim, sometimes she wanders in a Doubt,
Faith trims her Lamp, but never puts it out.

So Travellers, scarce perfect in their Way,
Thro' Inadvertence often go astray : —
A Friend directs ----- they know th' Advice is true,
And thankfully the nearest Road pursue.

'Tis Education chiefly, that misguides ;
 Hence Folly takes such large, and dang'rous Strides.
 As useful Steel, attemper'd much too fine,
 Grows but more brittle, tho' it learns to shine,
 So Sense, less subtiliz'd, is sounder taught,
 Hence in SIMPLICIUS Energy of Thought ;
 Above, below enthusiastic Arts,
 Which heat out Fancies, but not mend our Hearts.
O wondrous Priest ! Thee better Notes shall sing,
 No Slave to Man, for JESUS is *thy King*.

BUT, lo ! sophistic Schools, a wrangling Rout !
 Who help our Eyes, or help to put 'em out.
 See where *scarst Sages*, for their Rights perplex,
 Still *weaken, stretch, and agonize* the Text.
 Where zealous *Calvin* warns on *Faith* to rest ;
 Where wise *Arminius* bids us *work* our best.
 Where *Some* reform on true free-thinking Rules,
 Yet call their fond *Refiners* Knaves and Fools :
 Where *These* again essay to take their Turn,
 Drive when they mount, and emulate and burn.
 Frail, erring All ! nor often in the Right !
 So Meteors glare with wild delusive Light :

“ *Then, Gracious God, how well dost thou provide*

“ *For erring Reason, an unerring Guide !*

BUT anxious are our Fears left yet we stray,
Our *Guide* perverted at the Noon of Day !
Oh ! for some friendly Hand to trace the Clue
Thro' Labyrinths of Comments-----old, and new !

LO here ! crys *Rome* ----- the Ark that takes all in,
That saves from drowning, saves ----- thro' thick and thin !
Lo here ! lo there ! ----- Strange Titles, and Pretence,
Felons of Souls, and Felons of our Sense !
Believe 'em not ----- says Heav'n and Earth's great Lord ;
All boast his Name, yet All corrupt *his Word*.
Say, Isn't REASON *here*, to Man a Rule ?
Or is the *Stamp* of *Man*, the *Badge* of *Fool* ?
Since the Complexion of *true Faith* is such,
That Most believe too Little, or too Much.

BUT, lo ! the *Bard* points out the arduous Path
Betwixt th' Extreams of *Reason* and of *Faith* :
See him defend, in Simile and Rhime,
The Mysteries of past, and present Time.
What mighty Feats fine Images can do !
They glance at Nature, but not copy true :

Like

Like *Kneller's* Art can paint a partial Face,
 Shade o'er a Blemish, or bestow a Grace ;
 Or those whose Colours make the Figures shine,
 But little know of Drawing and Design.

CANST thou resolve the Doubts, which Saints but hide,
 All born of *Reason*, tho' ascrib'd to Pride ?
 Where lies the Pride? or who inherits most —
 CODEX ? with Little more than Pride to boast;
 Who PASTORS Others with dogmatic Rules,
 Calls Atheists, Deists, Hereticks, and Fools ;
 Or LENIUS ? Just to Truth and Conscience too -----
 (Nor wishes *This*, nor fears lest *That* be true.)
 Who tho' his more unbiass'd Sense disclaims
 The Bribes of Infancy, and rubric Names ;
 Thinks, doubts, believes, all for himself alone,
 Nor seeks the dictatorial Chair, and Gown :
 Leaves all Men free, as all Mankind was born,
 Nor bandys Epithets of Rage and Scorn.
 Just was the *Mitre* ----- Greatest, Best of Names !
 Whom *V-----n* abuses, and whom *Hooker* blames !

O! the soft Music of thy melting Lines ;
 In Spite of *Reason*, all the Poet shines !

Not *Cibber's* Odes more justly claim the Bays:
 Pray call them *Rhapsodys*, and not *Essays*!
 How sweet you sing what our first Parents knew!
 'Tis wondrous fine! Pray, Sir, who told it you?

“ *They *saw the Source of Actions, and the End;*
 “ *Why Things are opposite, and why they blend;*
 “ *How from eternal Causes Good and Ill*
 “ *Subsist; how mingle, yet are diff'rent still*
 “ *How Modes of Substance soften and unite;*
 “ *How Strength of Falshood glares, and Strength of*
 “ *Half of the God came open to their View.-----* [Light.]

HAIL, happy Logick! Hail, advent'rous Youth!
 'Tis soft, 'tis bold, 'tis every Thing ----- but Truth.
 And all your high-flown Compliment to *Eve*,
 Is gross and rank ----- or *Faith* and *Fact* deceive.

THE Thirst of *Knowledge* was our Parent's Curse,
 That *baleful Tree* of all her Ills the Source!
 Her Ignorance, the Open to her Foe;
 Strange! she who knew so much was baff'd so;
 Abstracted Thought is Pain ----- cou'd *Adam* know it?
 Who does not know, that *Adam* was a Poet?

Ten Thousand Beauties, op'ning to his View,
 Inspir'd Description, natural, and new :
This he might boast — 'twas Darknes all the rest,
 The first Editions * of his Works, the best.
Knew † from God's Mind why boundless Virtue rose,
 Why his unerring Will that Virtue chose.
 Knew ! the great Chain of Fittnesses and Schemes,
 Not Something sep'rate, (as the § Deist dreams,
 Go on, obliging Sir, ----- We'll stand the Shock,
 Such too was *Chillingworth*, and such was *Locke* !

Who ever dreamt of *thus dividing* God ?
 Or dar'd to snatch the Balance and the Rod !
To circumscribe his Pow'r, contract his Skill,
 Or tell how *Reason binds th' immortal Will* !
 Is it, ----- to say his Wisdom is his Guide ?
 (No Tyrant-Will, no arbitrary Pride,)
 Still ----- Wisdom is his own eternal Mind ;
 But Who can look at GOD, and not be blind !

CURIOUS who reads your pompous *Essay* o'er,
 Finds Much to please him ---- to displease him ---- More.

* *Vide some of Adam's first Pieces, (viz.) An Uncritical Essay. Eden Forest. Lucifer's Invasion and Overthrow ; An Epic Poem — wrote originally in celestial Language, and giv'n to Adam by Urania, with whose Help also he translated it ; to his own great Advantage, — as appears by the Sequel.*

† Page 3.

§ No Reproach, if our Author be a Priest.

The flowing Verse his Voice and Ears imploy,
The jarring *Reason* damps the tuneful Joy :
So Epidemics take fantastic Turns,
The Wretch now freezes, and anon he burns.

You give to *Adam* Reason to a Fau't,
Above the Cherub's Reach, the Seraph's Thought :
Finite almost like *Infinite* is shown,
Copartner in *his Wisdom*, and *his Throne*.
Essays like these fill sober Minds with Dread ;
I read --- I paus'd ---- I wonder'd ---- and I read !

YET *Adam's* Patron is his Offspring's Foe,
(Such in Effect, whatever else in Show.)
If *Adam's Reason* had so high a Claim,
Why then not leave large Portions of the same ?
Or, say *it* suffer'd something by the *Fall*,
Left he then none, or next to none at all ?
So once my Sire was rich, and had a Friend,
(Words were his Friendship, Zeal that knew no End.)
My Father dy'd ---- I saw him once ---- no more ----
I begg'd a Shilling ---- and he shut the Door.

OMNISCIENT *Adam* utmost Science knew !
His Sons a worthless, and an Idiot Crew !

Heav'n!

Heav'n ! what a Race of miserable Fools ;
 The *Serpent* bruis'd their *Heels* ---- and *you* their *Skulls* !

KNOW thy own Genius, and the Task give o'er ;
 Or sing, *in Compass*, on the safer Shore :
 Or float like *Buoys* upon the swelling Tide,
 To mark the *Weight*, by which the Vessels ride.

WHAT Rashness urg'd this metaphysic Strife !
 Why shou'd thy Fame go out ---- before thy Life ?
 Such finewy Wrestlers are too hard for thee,
 Impassive by the Darts of Poetry :
 Or, if such Weapons cou'd awhile defend,
 They'd soon close in, and crush thee in the End.

AH ! leave not thus thy *Calling* in the Lurch :
 But leave Polemics to th' *unerring Church*.
 Let her sage Vet'rans militate for Pay,
 A long experienc'd, and successful Way !
 Who found Damnation in our frightened Ears,
 And always press, for Want of Volunteers ;
 Who sep'rate *Faith* from *God's*, and *Reason's* Rules,
 And found their Empire in a Race of Fools :
 Triumph o'er Knowledge, and with hallow'd Pride,
 Enslave Mankind ---- and Common-Sense deride !

WHEN MEAD turns Mountebank, and builds a Stage,
 Or HENLEY mends the Morals of the Age ;
 When CANTERBURY'S SEE shall go a begging,
Templers turn Saints --- or CHURCHILL stand a Fagging ;
 When WINCHESTER'S translated hence to *Rome*,
 Or LONDON a Dissenter turns at Home ;
 When *Britons* Politicks shall leave to read,
 And WHISTON likes the *Athanasian* Creed ;
 Then shall thy *Infant Name* illustrious shine
 A SOLID REAS'NER, and a SOUND DIVINE.

F I N I S.



